UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE Northeast Fisheries Science Center 166 Water Street Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

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April 11, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR:

NEFOP Observers

FROM:

Amy Van Atten

NMFS-Fisheries Sampling Branch (FSB)

Operations Coordinator

SUBJECT:

iPAQ, OBSCON and Special Reporting Training

On April 3-4, 2008, "iPAQ, OBSCON and Special Reporting" training was presented to the Fisheries Sampling Branch staff and Field/Area Regional Coordinators to re-emphasize the major importance of these data and to address growing concern about the increased volume of data reporting errors. In order for NMFS to monitor certain species and fish stocks of concern, and for NEFOP to provide appropriate observer coverage, it is essential that these 'real time' data are uploaded in an accurate, timely manner. Special Access Program (SAP) haul and species data are analyzed daily by NMFS Northeast Regional Office to calculate "catch - discard" rates, ultimately leading to federal management decisions that open or close special access fisheries. OBSCON data are analyzed daily by NMFS and the Observer Service Providers to constantly assess the level and distribution of observer coverage and comparisons of achieved coverage to NMFS tasking.

The purpose of this refresher was to assist observer support staff in conveying accurate information and helpful tips to observers in order to alleviate any confusion and decrease reporting errors. The class reviewed all OBSCON and SAP data fields and appropriate codes and also did 'hands-on' iPAQ data entry and upload for various trip 'scenarios'. Discussion was focused on the importance of using the iPAQ Manual, highlighting 'trouble spots', and taking along the "Regular B-Day Program and US/Canada Management Area Special Access Reporting CHEAT SHEET" to use on all SAP trips.

The enclosed documents are 'hand-outs' that were provided at the class. They provide a summary of the OBSCON and SAP topics discussed including "Common Errors in OBSCON and SAP Reporting". Please take time to review these documents and to contact your editor with any questions you have regarding OBSCON and/or SAP data reporting. This training was an approach to bring all staff up to speed on the importance of accurate reporting.

NEFOP Memo 08-007 (Page 1 of 2)

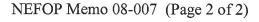


We need your support and attention to this matter as well. Please be punctual and accurate with you OBSCON data, use your reference materials, and contact your editor if you have questions. Don't send in incomplete OBSCON reports. Continue to communicate clearly with the captain on the fishery declarations at the start of the trip and questions on 'flipping' and 'flexing' at the end of the trip.

Thank you for your attention and interest.

Attachments:

OBSCON – Observer Contractor Trip Reporting Common Errors in OBSCON Trip Reporting Special Reporting Requirements: Special Access Programs Common Errors in Special Access Program (SAP) Reporting Thank you!





OBSCON

Observer Contractor Trip Reporting

What is it?

- Required trip reporting system where key fields are uploaded through an electronic pocket PC (iPAQ) after each trip.
- Key fields chosen by NEFOP staff that best represent an observer's trip. Most fields in OBSCON are taken directly from the Vessel & Trip Log.

Timeliness

- After a trip lands, iPAQ should be uploaded <u>immediately</u> (within 24 hours).
 We should expect to see your trip in OBSCON no later than a day after your trip lands.
- If for some reason, iPAQ is not uploading correctly, call your AC or Erin Kupcha with all OBSCON information.

Fields in OBSCON

- Observer/Trip Identifier Your three character Observer I.D. combined with your three character Trip Number.
 Example: C46007
- Program Code Three digit program code assigned to a trip. If unsure what the proper program code is, contact AC.

Example: 130

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

8. <u>Contract Area</u> – For trips targeting Atlantic Sea Scallop, record whether the trip is Limited Access or General Category. All other trips should be recorded as Standard Trip.

046 = Limited Access Scallop

047 = General Category Scallop

000 = Standard Trip

999 = Unknown

9. <u>Primary Target Species</u> – The primary species sought with the gear type recorded in GEAR CODE (#7).

Example: Flounder, Yellowtail

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

10. <u>Secondary Target Species</u> – The secondary species or species group sought with the type of gear recorded in GEAR CODE (#7).

Example: Flounder, Winter

11. <u>Primary Species Landed</u> – Name of species which had the greatest total number of pounds landed (kept and sold) for this trip.

Example: Flounder, Yellowtail

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

- 16. <u>Six-Month Questions</u> Were the sixmonth questions asked on this trip? There is no unknown available, must be YES or NO.
- 17. <u>Total Number of Hauls</u> The **total** number of hauls during this trip (both observed and unobserved).

Example: 34

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

18. <u>Sea Days</u> – The number of days that the vessel was away from port on this fishing trip.

<u>NEFOP Sea day definition:</u> Observer is on the water for six hours or more in one day or the gear touches the water (set/hauled/washed).

19. <u>Incidental Take</u> – If an incidental take occurred on this trip, observer is required to key punch the pertinent information regarding each individual incidental take.

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

- 24. <u>Incidental Take Samples</u> Were any samples taken from the animal listed in the INCIDENTAL TAKE SPECIES (#19)?
 - * No (record reason in comments)
 - * Yes (complete SAMPLE LOCATION (#25) field).
- 25. <u>Sample Location</u> The specific location of the incidental take samples taken on this trip.

Example: Tech Park

Observer's freezer

Fields in OBSCON (cont)

26. <u>Notes</u> – Key punch any additional information regarding your trip or incidental take(s).

Examples:

- * Tag number for the incidental take.
- * Hull number for vessel if it is not available on the drop down menu.
- * Pertinent SAP information regarding where the vessel was fishing (ex; vessel never entered US/CAN area).
- ** SAP Data must also get uploaded if trip took place in a SAP area **

iPAQ, OBSCON, and Special Reporting Refresher Training April 3 & 4, 2008

Common errors in ObsCon Reporting

Stephanie Palker OBSCON Editor

Trip Tab pages 1-2 More Trip pages 3-4 Pages 5-6 West Code: Pages 1-2 Particle Pages 1-2 Pages 1-2

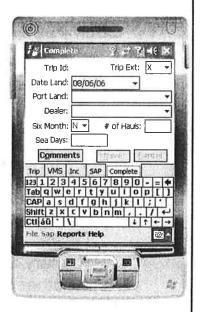
Common errors on More Trip

- <u>Target 1</u> observers using target species from haul logs.
 - · should match Vessel & Trip.
 - NEVER use 0000.
- Target 2 observers using 0000; duplicating target 1; using target species from haul logs
 - if no target 2, LEAVE BLANK. (Use blue box to clear entry)
 - NEVER use 0000.
- Primary species landed observers using 0000; leaving blank; incorrect, especially when wings or tails.
 - If no prim. species landed, LEAVE BLANK. (use blue box to clear entry)
 - Calculate primary species landed using haul logs, fill in. Specify wings or tails when applicable.
 - NEVER use 0000.



Common errors on Complete Tab

- Trip Extension observers not filling out correctly on aborted trips
 - Review extensions in Program Manual
- <u>Dealer</u> observers not recording new or multiple dealers properly; using "No Dealer".
 - Ask where dealer is located. If dealer is not in iPAQ, write location in comments.
 - When multiple dealers, record dealer to which the majority of the catch went.
 - Verify dealer in Program Manual. Never use "No Dealer"
- Sea days observers not calculating correctly.
 - Six or more hours, or any gear set, hauled, or washed during calendar day.



What can I do to help eliminate errors?

- Be knowledgeable about procedures and where to find answers in iPAQ and Program Manuals. Highlight critical information.
- ALWAYS have iPAQ Manual present when filling out ObsCon.
- > ALWAYS review data with the iPAQ Manual before uploading.
- If you still aren't sure about something, don't guess, ASK!

Special Reporting Requirements:
Special Access Programs,
U.S./Canada Area, Regular B-Day
Program, & Scallop Access Areas
Amy S. Van Atten

Regulatory Terms

- TU.S./Canada (USC) Management Area
- VMS Vessel Monitoring System
- - A-DAS
 - B-DAS
 - Regular B-DAS
 - Reserve B-DAS
- * TAC Total Allowable Catch
- & Access Area (Closed Area) scallop

The Catch Data

- Provides the Regional Office with catch weights of certain important species
- Reported real time on iPAQ at download
- Summarize catch weights by trip for observed tows
 - Kept and discarded by species
- Compared to fishermen reports and used as a correction factor for overall catch rates

PROGRAM CODES (Trip Log & iPAQ)

- © U.S./Canada Area = 130
- Regular B-DAS Program = 150
- Nantucket Lightship Access Area = 201 (SAP data)
- Closed Area I Access Area = 202 (SAP data)
- © Closed Area II Access Area = 203 (closed)
- # Hudson Canyon Access Area = 204 (no SAP data)
- Filephant Trunk Access Area = 206 (no SAP data)

Other Terms

- Flipping Happens when catch limits are exceeded and the category of days must be changed from B- to A-days.
- Flexing Only applies to Eastern USC
 - Flex Out of Eastern USC (start in Eastern and fish in open area)
 - Flex West of Eastern USC (start in Eastern and fish in Western area)

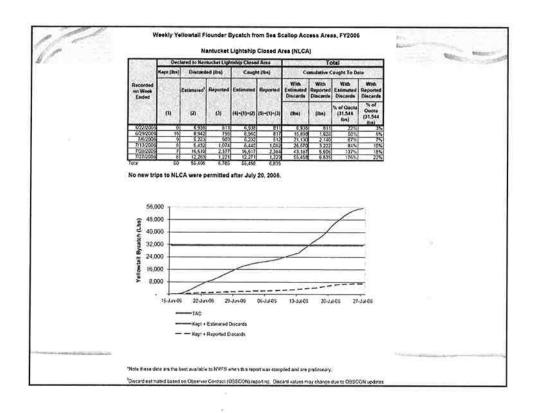
Regular B-Day Program (150)

- Opportunity to use B-DAS outside SAP's
- Prohibits discards of legal-sized groundfish
- If trip limits are exceeded during a trip, the vessel has to flip to A-DAS
- Can fish in open areas, including U.S./Canada
- Species reported on iPAQ: cod, haddock, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, white hake, winter flounder, witch flounder

Review Cheat Sheet before going out on a Special Access Program Trips

Scallop Access Areas

- Use iPAQ to report catch weights of:
 - Kept scallop meats
 - Kept and discarded yellowtail flounder
- Program Codes for Scallop Access Areas:
 - Nantucket Lightship Area = 201 (SAP data)
 - Closed Area I = 202 (SAP data)
 - Hudson Canyon Area = 204
 - Elephant Trunk Area = 206



REFERENCES

- US/Canada and Regular B-Day Program Cheat Sheet
- Monitoring:

http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/fso/

Common Errors in SAP Reporting

- Actual species weights recorded for observed Open Area (OA) hauls on WEST USCA 4+ trips. SHOULD BE '0's.
- 0's recorded for observed Open Area (OA) hauls on EAST USCA 2, 5 and 6 trips. SHOULD BE ACTUAL WEIGHTS.
- "Dressed" weight recorded on haul log but "Round" weight recorded in iPAQ SAP species upload (or visa versa).
- SAP haul/species data uploaded for USCA trips that never enter the USCA area. SHOULD JUST ENTER COMMENT "No hauls in USCA" in OBSCON AND ON V&T LOG. PROGRAM CODE REMAINS 130 but SAP tab data not required. BUT BE CERTAIN ALL BEGIN & END HAULS ARE ENTIRELY OUTSIDE USCA (use CalPos program on iPAQ).
- "SAP Area" field (OA,WA,EA,ES) incorrect or left blank.
- VMS code field (2,4,4+,5, or 6) is incorrect of left blank.
- VMS code is entered into "Contract Area" field.
- Multiple transcription errors or observed haul(s) skipped.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Read & use the Reg. B-Days Program and USCA Mgm't. Area SAP Cheat Sheet for all SAP trips.
- Read & use the iPAQ Manual (SAP info isn't in Observer Manual) and highlight important items.
- Fill in ALL required fields in iPAQ and check data for accuracy before confirming the upload.
- The Program Code 'called in' to VCIC may not match the actual VMS declaration. Always ask Captain, when underway, what Program was declared in VMS (not 'Are you fishing in the USCA?').
- Use CalPos program to verify SAP area.

CONTRACT AREA CODES

(iPAQ 'More Trip' tab)

DON'T LEAVE THIS FIELD BLANK! DON'T ENTER THE VMS CODE IN THIS FIELD!

- 000 = Standard Trip (gillnet, trawl, seine, pot & trap..)
- 046 = Limited Access scallop trip
- 047 = General Category scallop trip
- 048 = Video Monitoring Trip
- 049 = Processor Vessel
- 101 = Georges Bank Fixed Gear Sector (JQ will enter)
- 102 = Georges Bank Hook Sector (Program Code 140 Hook-Haddock SAP longline trips only)
- 999 = Unknown

VMS CODES

(iPAQ 'VMS' tab)

- 2 = Eastern USCA (outside Closed area II)
- 4 = Western USCA only
- 4+ = Inside and outside Western USCA
- 5 = Eastern USCA Haddock SAP only
- 6 = Eastern USCA and Haddock SAP
- '-' = Unknown

REGULAR B-DAYS Program Program Code 150

- Regular B-Day Program trips cannot fish inside Eastern Haddock SAP
- VMS code is not required
- Flipped = YES or NO (ask captain at end of trip if they flipped from B days to A days)
- Flexed = possible only if fishing in the Eastern USCA.

SCALLOP ACCESS AREAS

- VMS Tab is not required
- Contract Area Code (046, 047)
- <u>Haul Observed/Unobserved</u>: Record "N" (not observed) in this field for off-watch scallop hauls and on-watch hauls that are not observed. All hauls must be entered on the iPAQ whether they are observed or unobserved.
- 'SAP Area' defaults to null (blank). Leave as blank.
- Discarded scallop meats defaults to zero. Leave as zero.